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Developing anti-racist awareness for leaders and participants at Nuoret Kotkat activities

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Developing anti-racist awareness for leaders and participants at Nuoret Kotkat activities

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Abstract

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The purpose of this action-based thesis project was to develop anti-racist and anti-discriminative awareness among leaders and participants from the children and youth organisation Nuoret Kotkat. The project consisted of a training weekend for three days and an international evening, both held during the Action Weeks Against Racism in March 2012. All activities were planned and implemented in cooperation with the working life partner Nuoret Kotkat.

The participants should get empowered to include anti-racist ideas more actively into their future activities. The purpose of the training weekend was to bring anti-racism and anti-discrimination into practice. The purpose of the whole thesis project was to draw more attention on the importance of acting anti-racist and anti-discriminative within the social work field.

All project activities were based on the theories anti-oppressive practice (AOP) and anti-discriminative practice (ADP). Both theories offered a good ground for promoting anti-racist and anti-discriminative ideas within the project time. Further, anti-oppressive practice and anti-discriminative practice supported actively working life partner's values such as equality, partnership and self-reflection.

Empowerment evaluation was chosen as the evaluation method for the implemented project. The evaluation was implemented in an informal way as a group discussion; following the three steps this evaluation method is divided.

Keywords: anti-racist, anti-oppressive practice, anti-discriminative practice, Nuoret Kotkat

Lara-Elain Bernhauser, Outi Pätsi

**Rasisminvastaisuuden edistäminen nuorten ohjaajien ja osanottajien toiminnassa
Nuoret Kotkat -järjestössä**

Vuosi 2012

Sivumäärä 66

Tämän toiminnallisen opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli kehittää rasismiin- ja syrjinnänvastaista tietoisuutta lasten- ja nuorten järjestön Nuorten Kotkien ohjaajien ja osanottajien keskuudessa. Projekti koostui kolmepäiväisestä koulutusviikonlopusta ja kansainvälisestä illanvietosta. Molemmat tapahtumat järjestettiin Kansainvälisillä Rasisminvastaisilla Viikoilla maaliskuussa 2012. Kaikki aktiviteetit suunniteltiin ja toteutettiin yhteistyössä työelämän yhteiskumppanin Nuoret Kotkat -järjestön kanssa.

Osallistujien tulisi saada lisää vahvuuksia toimia rasisminvastaisten aatteiden mukaisesti tulevaisuudessa. Koulutusviikonlopun tarkoituksena oli siirtää rasismiin- ja syrjinnänvastainen tietoisuus käytäntöön. Koko opinnäytetyöprojektin tarkoituksena oli kiinnittää enemmän huomiota toimia rasismiin- ja syrjinnänvastaisesti sosiaalityön eri aloilla.

Kaikki projektin toiminta perustuu syrjinnän- ja sorsionvastaisiin käytäntöihin. Molemmat käytännöt antoivat hyvän pohjan edistää rasismiin- ja syrjinnänvastaisia ideoita koko projektin ajan. Lisäksi käytännöt tukevat hyvin työelämän yhteistyökumppanin arvoja, kuten tasa-arvo, kumppanuus ja itsensä kehittäminen.

Valitsimme Vaikutusmahdollisuuksien arvioinnin arviointimenetelmäksi toteutetulle opinnäytetyöprojektillemme. Arviointi toteutettiin vapaamuotoisena ryhmäkeskusteluna, käyden läpi arvioinnin kolme eri vaihetta.

Asiasanat: rasisminvastaisuus, sorsionvastaiset käytännöt, syrjinnänvastaiset käytännöt, Nuoret Kotkat

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1 Introduction

Discrimination mirrors how society is divided into different groups (Thompson 1997, 12), one group wants to gain more power over another and in turn this often results in oppression. In order to eliminate oppression, discrimination should be challenged as well (Thompson 1997, XII). We decided to write our project thesis about discrimination and anti-racism. In co-operation with our working life partner Nuoret Kotkat we wanted to set an active sign against racism. We believe that only through active intervention can discrimination and racism be tackled. It is important that as many people as possible become aware of the existence of these phenomena in order to challenge them.

Our project thesis consists of a training weekend for camp leaders and young persons from the children and youth organisation Nuoret Kotkat (Chapter 2) and an international evening on the 21st of March. Annually, in mid-March, the Action Weeks against Racism takes place and during these weeks on the 21st of March is the “International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination”. Sadly many people are not aware of these events and our project thesis was a good way to draw more attention to the Action Weeks against Racism. The 21st of March symbolises the Memorial Day for the victims of the 1960 massacre in Sharpeville, South Africa.

We based our project's activities on the theories' anti-oppressive practice and anti-discriminative practice. They actively tackle oppression and discrimination and go well with the values of Nuoret Kotkat like solidarity and partnership.

The purpose of our project is to gain more awareness of the existence of racism. We believe that people working with children and the youth (as professionals or volunteers) should be empowered to a maximum to include anti-racist and anti-discriminative practice actively into their work. With our project we want to develop anti-racism and discrimination awareness for adults working with children and the youth and as Neil Thompson wrote: “if we are not committed to being part of the solution, we become part of the problem.” (1998, 74)

We evaluated our project thesis with empowerment evaluation, after our project was implemented. We had an evaluation session with volunteers from Nuoret Kotkat and followed the steps of empowerment evaluation.

2 Background of the thesis

2.1 Description of the working life partner

The working life partner of our thesis project is the children's and youth organisation Nuoret Kotkat. The organisation was founded in 1943 and has about 13 000 active members in Finland. They offer nation-wide free time activities for children and the youth. Their activities are open for everyone: participation fees are always low in order to give all children and young people a chance to take part. Activities such as camps, excursions and seminars for leaders are organised in fourteen districts all over Finland. The activities are based on Nuoret Kotkat values of equality, democracy, internationality, fairness, solidarity and working together. One of their main goals is to promote a world without discrimination. In addition to being a children's activity organisation and a promoter of children's rights, Nuoret Kotkat functions as a special interest group in political discussion where they promote children's interests.

The organisation is part of the Finnish Social Democratic Party (Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue - SDP) organisation family. However, members of Nuoret Kotkat are not automatically members of the party. Nuoret Kotkat is also a member of the Joint Committee of Scandinavian Falcon organisation's international organisations Arbetarrörelsens Barnorganisationer i Norden (ABN) and the International Falcon Movement - Socialist Educational International (IFM- SEI). The organisation sets actively on co-operations with other organisations and takes part in activities outside Finland as well in order to get in contact with members of their partner organisations. As written in their values, Nuoret Kotkat supports "Friendship over borders" (Nuoret Kotkat -English leaflet), because it is important to meet new people from Finland or abroad and to get to know them. Through contact with people from other cultures new friends can be made and tolerance can be actively promoted.

Nuoret Kotkat receives money from the state and from the districts where the groups are located. The cities also support the districts financially. Further, the organisation is financed through the member fees and it also gets financial support from trade unions and the Social Democratic Party of Finland.

Nuoret Kotkat offers children and young persons the opportunity to work and play with others under the support of secure adults. The organisation's goal is to empower children and young people to take others into consideration.

To understand the world and what is going on around oneself it is necessary to look at others and their views as well. Through practising democracy in all activities children can become active citizens. All activities in clubs, camps, trips and other events are decided by the adults and children together.

Nuoret Kotkat frequently organises trainings for their members who are helping in the camps (and other activities) as leaders. Usually everyone over 18 years old becomes a camp leader and can go to trainings. Young persons under 18 years can support the leaders in camps. They can attend trainings as well, those trainings for camp leaders and camps' participants together are called "peer support instructor training". Trainings are often organised because the organisation believes that "constant training further increases their (volunteers and participants) skills and know-how". (Nuoret Kotkat -English leaflet). Through frequent trainings the volunteers get chances to update their knowledge and to include new ideas into their practice. As Okitikpi and Aymer (2010, 159) point out practitioners have to be aware of changes that take place in social work practice and to respond adequately to these. In their trainings Nuoret Kotkat emphasize on tasks camp leaders have to do in camps, such as organising activities and taking care of the children. It is discussed what it means to be a camp leader and to be responsible for younger children and youth. At the trainings they talk about different activities that could be done and they also plan and prepare activities and camps. Usually the trainings are more generic about Nuoret Kotkat activities and are not focused on a particular topic. We thought it would be beneficial to focus on the topics racism and discrimination because these topics could occur anytime in of the activities.

According to one of their values, to "provide safe recreational activities for children" (Nuoret Kotkat -English leaflet) it is important to rethink one's own actions and to develop new methods and ideas. Based on new ideas, forwarding processes for the future can happen. (See appendix 4 - values of Nuoret Kotkat in English.)

The cooperation with the working life partner evolved from long lasting contact with the German partner organisation SJD - die Falken. We thought that both the event of the Action Weeks against Racism and the organisation Nuoret Kotkat matched perfectly together, because Nuoret Kotkat is an organisation that speaks clearly against any kind of discrimination.

2.2 Other organisations' activities against racism

Within the Action Weeks Against Racism many activities are yearly arranged by organisation that speak clearly out against racism and promote anti-racist practices on their events. For example the Finnish red cross created a few years ago the campaign "dare to care", which was created to outline especially everyday racism occurring in Finland. Further, the nationwide network "RASMUS" organises frequently activities against racism and xenophobia. The organisation is very active within the annual Action Weeks Against Racism as well. They cooperate with other organisations in order to get more attention to Anti-racist activities. The internet page www.keks.fi is part of the Finnish Youth Cooperation "Allianssi ry". This site works as a database and collects information about activities happening against racism. The database addresses especially people who are working in the field of youth work and want to include anti-racism into their own practice. According to the report of the Europe-wide campaign "Act! Against Racism" (2005) Finland was in the year of the report another time one of the most active countries within the Action Weeks Against Racism.

3 Theoretical background

The theories we set the focus on for the implementation our thesis project were anti-discriminatory practice (ADP) and anti-oppressive practice (AOP). In the following chapter we are going to present and discuss these practices more in detail.

3.1 Anti-discriminatory practice

The idea behind anti-discriminatory practice (ADP) is that every individual should be treated equally and fairly regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender, class or physical constitution.

Everyone has the right to be respected and treated with dignity. ADP accepts diversity and differences between people (Okitikpi & Aymer 2010, 132), and all parts of the society and minorities are included. Further, social justice, economic fairness, and equality of opportunities for everyone are considered. Nowadays the gap between the poor and the rich is increasing, which is why economic aspects like poverty often lead to discrimination. Even though there have been improvements in eliminating discrimination, like designing laws against discrimination, many people still face discrimination. The aims of ADP are to work for changes and to overcome discrimination.

When describing anti-discriminative practice it makes sense to look at discrimination and to define the term: “At most basic level, discrimination is simply a matter of identifying differences and can be positive and negative”. (Okitikpi & Aymer 2010, 10) Many ways of discrimination exist and it can be experienced differently. Personal experiences with discrimination should be taken seriously and handled carefully. Everyone has personal ways to cope with experiences, which makes it important to respond adequately to personal needs in coping with discrimination. Discrimination always has an effect on people, physically and / or psychologically. It has social effects too, because through discrimination people can be excluded from certain activities or parts of the society.

The ideas behind ADP can be connected to the Western European's enlightenment movement in the 17th century, as well as to the black liberation movement in the 1960's in the United States. The concepts of the mentioned movements have equal ideas with ADP: In the centre stand the human rights and the understanding that all humans are independent and have the ability to act and think freely without guidance on them and/or their thinking.

However, it is important to consider that those who are actual victims of discrimination can discriminate others too. “Members of a group can be both oppressors and oppressed at the same time”. (Dominelli 2002, 15) Experiencing discrimination does not mean that a person cannot discriminate others. People who are asking for acceptance for their personal views or their position in the society might not show similar respect for others as they expect to receive for themselves.

Discrimination can happen on different levels, in interaction between people (among friends, in schools, day cares, and/or work places) or in contact with higher authorities (for instance with social services, police). The idea of ADP is to work towards a change of discriminative structures and in order to eliminate discrimination on every level.

ADP does not focus only on perceptions individuals have about others, as changes should be seen in the whole society and should have a greater effect than only changing the views of a few. An important tool is to use existing anti-discrimination laws to protect people affected by discrimination. In this case social workers have the important role to act as a mediator between clients and authorities. (Thompson 1997, 10)

Active, questioning of views and perceptions is important. There should be no false tolerance or acceptance. ADP exists to empower people, to fight for their rights and their acceptance as full members of the society without being discriminated. This makes it essential to be aware of those who overtake the ideas of ADP for their personal intolerant ideas (Okitikpi & Aymer 2010, 35). ADP does not exist in order to promote the intolerance of people who are discriminative themselves towards others.

The society is changing, so are working environments. Practitioners need to be aware of these changes and be able to respond to these in order to secure a fairer environment for their clients. Social workers as well need awareness of possible discrimination even among practitioners of this profession. Without the awareness and ability to identify oppression the profession could become a “dangerous social work”. (Thompson 1997, 70) This is why one's own actions and prejudices need to be evaluated. The skill of self-reflection needs to be developed all the time. Social workers have to know about the power that one's own actions might have and possible existing prejudices can be fought better through self-reflection.

Social workers should promote social change and care about clients' well-being. ADP supports these factors and is a great support for social work practice. Especially nowadays more and more social work agencies act in a multicultural environment where clients might face discrimination.

In order to be able to promote societal changes, organisations and/or agencies following ADP have to stand behind the theory in order to promote these values through activities. It is important that practitioners are supported by their agencies or organisations when implementing anti-discriminative practice.

The political background behind ADP needs to be considered as well, because it has an effect on this practice. Practitioners, for example, are influenced by their own political ideas which they integrate into their work. Not only are relationships between people important to focus on, but the political side matters as well.

Besides the commitment to anti-discriminative practice, practitioners need to include theory in their daily work.

They have to challenge discrimination and unfair treatment happening in the society and especially with their clients (Okitikpi & Aymer 2010, 55).

In order to have these abilities, practitioners need to be educated to give them chances to evaluate their own actions better. They have to develop theory and new ideas to promote social change. Especially because the society and working environment is changing all the time, social workers need to update their working methods. The working methods and ideas behind actions have to respond to clients' current needs, which might change over time.

It is not easy for anyone, whether a practitioner or a client to cope with the rapidly changing world. All people in the society have to cope with changes and some might need support with that.

Practitioners need to be given chances to learn to cope with societal changes, too. Further, they need to develop the skills and methods to respond to these changes.

3.2 Anti-oppressive practice

Anti-oppressive practice (AOP) is a client centred approach in social work. Clients define themselves by what is important for them. Considering their needs is the focus of this practice. Social work professionals have to answer to the clients' needs no matter what their social status is. They should always start from the point where the clients are. (Adams & Dominelli & Payne 2002, 26)

Anti-oppressive practice was developed based on radical social work writings from the Mid- 1970's. These writers were influenced by Marxist' ideas of class analysis, in analysing and rethinking social work agencies. (Campbell 2003) AOP was developed on the critical thinking that relationships are always influenced by power and power imbalances. Social work exists to tackle these and to fight for equality.

In the 1980's social workers, mostly in the UK, (Pötzsch class hand out 2011) felt that clients' matters were left out. Social movements (amongst others civil rights, feminists, gay and lesbian movements) became more active (and still are nowadays), which had an impact on the formation of anti-oppressive ideas. These days social movements are active as well, which is why social work needs to pay attention to them and their matters.

AOP was developed out of the need to change social work, and nowadays societal problems like social exclusion and rising unemployment increase, which requires social work to redefine its work constantly.

The goal of AOP is to create an equal society without oppressive relationships. Further goals are reducing and eliminating hierarchy in every relationship. AOP works towards societal changes and aims to treat everyone equally. Also, the relationship between a practitioner and a client has to be based on equality. An important skill that social workers should have, especially when promoting anti-oppressive methods, is being aware of the impact one's own actions might have on the clients' or others' lives and situations.

The social worker who asks for equality should promote these values particularly through own actions. For example, by showing every client similar respect regardless of what their background is.

Changes in relationships or hierarchic systems can be small, too. Still, small changes in client's lives might have a great impact on their situation and might change their life situations immensely. However, the effect that social work has on one individual often has a "mutual impact" on others (Adams et al. 2002, 02). If for example a person's situation in a family has changed, this change might have a positive influence on the whole family, and not only on one family member.

Due to economic oppression, the gap between the rich and the poor is increasing (Dominelli 2002, 3). This makes it even more essential to rethink social work practices and to adapt these in to the current situation.

Social work is always connected to action and, especially when working in an AOP environment, a commitment to change and action is crucial. As much as the outcome matters, the process in achieving the goal is important, too. Social workers need knowledge on the structures and systems in order to gain the ability to fight unfairness (Dalrymple & Burke 1995 as found in Campbell 2003) and to promote active change. We think it is important that social workers understand the world around them and what is going on in the society, because through this knowledge they gain a better understanding of their clients' needs and current life situations.

Anti-oppressive methods are needed to challenge and de-construct systems of oppression and to replace these with non-oppressive methods. New techniques should match the changing world and the clients' needs, which are changing, too. Oppression affects private and public areas. That is why personal and public problems of clients need to be considered. Private issues should be made and considered public. Usually problems of the individual are linked to public problems, which concern many people, the others often part of a similar group or a minority that faces similar barriers or problems.

AOP uses empowerment instead of oppressive methods to forward a process. Clients should always be included into processes and get full access to all resources. They have the right to be informed of what is happening around them and how the social worker forwards a process.

The higher the existence of empowerment, the more the potential for a structural change exists. (Thompson 1998, 74) Personal empowerment always has a positive impact on other levels as well, like the cultural level, which again has an influence on the societal level. (Thompson 1998, 212) This means that the empowerment of an individual has in the long term a positive effect on the whole society.

Also, other methods might be the answer to reach a positive outcome. Social workers need the ability to adapt their working methods to match the clients' current needs. Not every problem can be solved in the same way and it is important to not always expect fast results. Working with clients is not always a process and especially "empowerment is not a technique but a goal and a process." (Mullaly as found in Thompson 1997, 156)

Different levels of power also influence relationships differently. Power is never static but it is influenced by social interactions (Foucault 1983 as found in Dominelli 2008, 71), which is why power relations change all along.

Social workers should use their influence in order to promote societal changes and to support clients' needs. This means social work can use its communicative skills to de-construct power and to enable clients to be (more) powerful. Social work exists to assist those who are powerless and to support them to gain back the strength to change their life situations as much as possible independently. The social worker is more of an enabler than a leader. Social workers have to stand behind clients and their positions in order to be able to support them adequately. The social workers have to be solidly united with the oppressed (clients). This solidarity means fighting together for changes. (Freire 1972, 26) It is not the social worker's mission to overtake the client's tasks. Clients should be empowered to gain or improve the ability to change unfair relationships into equal ones.

The social worker can assist if needed, but the process should never be overtaken. Clients need to learn to become responsible for their own lives. At the end of a process they should be empowered enough to be active and jointly responsible citizens. Social workers have to offer choices to clients, which in return offer independence. The possibility to create own experiences and to experience making mistakes are a part of everyone's life and important steps on the way to independence.

In the relationship between the social worker and the client, the client should always be the driving force. The social worker exists only to support the client and to implement decisions made together. People should become aware of their own resources, as everyone has qualities and should be able to use them. Knowing one's own strengths is helpful in living independently. The clients should experience a sense of achievement, which is why it might be beneficial to start a process with a success, which motivates to work forward. Based on their life situation, clients often do not feel powerful and suffer from a lack of confidence. The social workers who should always care about clients' needs have to support clients in experiencing a feeling of self-efficacy.

For practitioners it is important to know how to identify oppression in order to fight it. Anti-oppressive practice supports the awareness of social workers to recognize oppression and unfair treatment.

It is always important to consider the personality as a whole, because someone who is oppressed can also be an oppressor him/herself. Of course there are more definitions of one's personality. That is why professionals should always get to know the whole picture of the client and his life situation.

Working with people always has a personal as well as a political dimension (Dalrymple & Burke 2006, 47). Social work is a political practice and does not only care about people's well-being. Changes have to be done at personal and structural levels. Social workers should be aware of this and consider the political side in addition to the personal when going into practice.

Other factors to consider when working in an AOP environment are personal reflexivity and partnership. Practitioners need to evaluate themselves in order to keep up with and to become part of the changing processes happening in the social work profession and the society. The relationship between the client and the social worker is based on mutual trust and transparency. The client has the right to be informed of every step that the social worker takes in order to be able to make choices and own decisions.

For the aimed social change partnership is important, social workers need a support network with partners from different agencies. Contacts should be made in different social arenas from which the social workers can benefit if support outside their own agency is needed. In some cases the social worker might feel powerless too, which is why it could be supportive to get help from other workers or organisations.

3.3 Comparison of both theories

Anti-discriminative practice and anti-oppressive practice are often considered as similar approaches. The views on differences and similarities between both approaches are unequal. However we would say that both approaches complement each other well, but definitely have differences and should not be seen as convertible. We would argue that how the differences are seen might depend on how someone defines discrimination and oppression, because for some people these phenomena are convertible too. Discrimination often affects only a certain group of people, for example immigrants or people with a handicap. Oppression has an effect on a wider spectrum of people.

As an example immigrants, people with a handicap, and unemployed people, who do not get enough social support for living, in this case a wider range of people is affected by oppression, which cannot be explained by discrimination. ADP definitely focuses more on eliminating discrimination and not on oppression as AOP does.

It is argued that ADP has its limitations in challenging oppression. The focus lies more on challenging existing laws and using the existing law system than changing or creating new laws. ADP might support or use the support of the existing law system. Laws on the other hand could also be considered as part of an authority which has the power to oppress others. Thomas and Pierson (as found in Thompson 1998, 77-78) argue that ADP's task is to address specific legally defined injustices. Anti-discrimination laws exist and it is important to use them and to challenge them. Existing laws are a great support when promoting ADP.

Nevertheless, legislation alone is not the key against discrimination. It depends on how legislation is used, interpreted or even abused. Legislation is definitely an important tool in tackling discrimination (Ahmed as found in Thompson 1997, 72-73) but might not be the only key. Legislation is given by the state and could also be seen as part of an oppressive system, which is why the ideas of AOP could be supportive in overcoming this oppression as well.

On the contrary, AOP is "about acknowledging differing power relations in society" (Dalrymple & Burke 2006, 4) Social workers and clients should rethink systems and their constructions. The aim is to change laws and systems in order to overcome oppressive relationships. A fundamental question is where the oppression comes from. AOP wants to overcome all kind of oppression and strives for total equality on all levels.

In conclusion, we would say that both the ADP and AOP approaches differ from one another, as described above. However these approaches are definitely a great support for one other in social work practice. When you want to challenge oppression it is very important that you tackle discrimination as well (Thompson 1998, 78), and the other way around. Oppression and discrimination often arise together, which is why both approaches can be a good way to complement each other to offer the best possible service for clients.

4 Project implementation

Our project consisted of a training weekend to bring anti-racism and anti-discrimination into practice. Further, we organised an international evening on the “International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination”.

The project was planned and implemented in cooperation with our working life partner, the children and youth organisation Nuoret Kotkat. We wanted to use our activities to draw more attention to anti-racism and the ways how to include anti-racist ideas into Nuoret Kotkat activities.

All activities within our thesis project were planned and created to support Nuoret Kotkat values and to set an active sign against any kind of discrimination. One of Nuoret Kotkat values is to create a more equal world without discrimination for everyone. Sadly, racism is still part of many people's daily life, especially among children and teenagers. In the settings of Nuoret Kotkat activities, situations of discrimination and racism can appear as well. This is why the organisation needs to educate itself and update its methods all the time in order to be able to keep up with societal changes and current issues. Through taking anti-racist perspectives into the organisation's work, a step towards a less discriminative environment and a better situation for everyone is taken. (Hazekamp & Popple ed. 1997, 11)

When people with different backgrounds and life stories come together there is always a risk of arising conflicts. Our games and different activities should provide the participants of Nuoret Kotkat for situations where they might face racism or discrimination. With our planned activities we wanted to present a base for future activities concerning anti-racism and discrimination. The learned skills and methods should be beneficial for their future practice and included in activities other than camps as well. After the training weekend they should be more empowered to stand actively against discrimination wherever it might occur.

An important aspect for us, while planning, was taking the participants into centre and to let them be active and equal in every activity. Equality between us and the participants will also have a greater aspect on their later actions. (Adams et al. 2002, 11) No one should be judged or evaluated by others. The idea was to discuss and make findings together, as it was a big part of the weekend's program.

Through creating partnership with the participants we wanted to reduce the power between them and us. (Thompson 1998, 213)

It was not our goal to be educators and to make the participants feel that they are in school or another formal educational institution.

All our chosen methods had active participation of the participants as a base in order to let them have an impact on every process on the weekend. Further, we wanted to be enablers, not leaders, in order to be able to empower the participants and to avoid a power imbalance between the participants and us.

To better keep the attention and motivation of the participants, we planned to use different methods. From former projects and placements we have learned that variation of methods is a good way to keep participants interested.

We know that too many methods could be confusing, too. This is why we tried to keep it interesting but simple. All our methods had in common the avoidance of any setting of formal learning.

The target group for the training weekend were new as well as experienced camp leaders of Nuoret Kotkat and participants of Nuoret Kotkat activities. Besides trainings for camp leaders the organisation regularly invites participants to their training weekends and calls this “peer support training”. The participants at the weekend were 15 to 27 years old. The party on the “International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination” was held on the 21st of March in Kauklahti/Espoo with a group of participants from the training weekend, other members of the organisation, and interested people from outside the organisation.

All our events took place within the Action Weeks against Racism which happens yearly. In 2012 these weeks were between the 12th and the 25th of March. We thought these weeks give a good frame for our activities and a chance to pick up the topic better.

Our implementation of the project is described in a chronological order.

4.1 Training weekend - 1st day

The training weekend was held in Kankaan Torppa in Urjala from Friday 16th to Sunday 18th of March 2012. Kankaan Torppa is a summer camp area owned by Nuoret Kotkat. This place is fit for winter habitation as well. The organisation arranges its own activities in Kankaan Torppa during the whole year and trainings mainly in the weekends.

All participants, including us, left together from Espoo and we arrived in Kankaan Torppa around 19:30 on Friday evening.

After arrival, getting to know the house, and finding a sleeping place for everyone, we started the weekend by welcoming everyone and presenting the plan for the weekend. On this plan, we wrote down the times when we wanted to eat and when the program took place. It was important for us to set the times together with the participants as well as with the cook. No one should have felt left out and everybody got a chance to make suggestions when planning the weekend's eating and free time hours. Even though not actively part of the weekend's content, the cook should have a say as well, since she had to prepare the meals at certain times.

We used “the Bears - Nallekortit” from Pesäpuu ry as a way of welcoming and giving everyone the chance to present current feelings. “The Bears - Nallekortit” or Nalle-cards, consist of pictures of teddy bears with many different moods, emotions and facial expressions. We thought that since not everyone knows each other so well in the beginning, it would be good start with a method where not much expression through communication is needed. Showing a chosen Nalle -card was enough to present actual feelings to others. We chose this method because it was familiar for us from our own studies and we thought it would be a positive start of the weekend's program without any pressure to talk too much. We wanted to give space for diversity so that everyone could express oneself and their feelings according to their own preferences, verbal or non-verbal.

We thought in the beginning that it will be important to get to know each other better, not only by names. That is why we decided to play a game called “Dominoes”. (Brander et al. 2004, 72) The idea was to use this game as an icebreaker; the participants should get in active contact with one another and have a chance to get to learn more about each other.

One person in the group announces two personal characteristics to the others, such as: “On my left side I am a girl, on my right side my hobby is running.” The characteristic can be visible or not. The one who shares one of these characteristics comes to hold the first person’s right or left hand, according to the characteristic they have in common. The way the contact is made can also be other than holding hands. For example, by touching heads, putting arms around each other or putting feet together. Then this person adds a new characteristic to his free side. All members of the group will take a turn and, in the end there is a chain where everyone is connected to everyone. If a stated characteristic is not shared by anyone else and the domino cannot be matched, the players are asked to negotiate another feature so that the chain can be continued.

At the end of the game we built a domino chain which presented that regardless of diversity and similarities we stand together as a group and build a bond for the weekend.

The aims of the game were not just to help people to get to know each other but to encourage physical contact as well. Creating a circle should encourage a stronger group feeling. The possibility to build up body contact differently than only by holding hands offered more choices to the participants. The made domino chain made it visible to everyone that there is a lot more to people than first meets the eye.

Further, the game should raise awareness that in a group, there are differences between individuals in addition to the things which are held in common. Here again, allowing diversity in the group is an important aspect. The group members should become aware of diversity everyone holds in oneself, but also to see that we have much more similarities than we might have thought in the beginning. Anti-discriminative practice promotes acceptance between people and their diversity (Okitikpi & Aymer 2010, 132) and seeing that diversity is not a permission to exclude anyone. To experience being one group is important, particularly because everyone did not know each other, it was a good way to get in contact with others and to become one group.

After this game, we did a brainstorming about expectations and feelings the participants had about the weekend. They could write or draw on big papers, as they wished. Afterwards we discussed their words, sentences and drawings. Here again we set the focus on diversity of expression, everyone should take part as he wants to.

We thought that the participants would get a better feeling of being heard, and that their opinions and expectations matter and have an impact. Already from the beginning of the weekend we wanted to maintain a feeling of being heard and being part of an active process.

4.2 Training weekend - 2nd day

After breakfast we started with our program. First we had a little warm-up while discussing with the participants how they felt about Friday evening and how they are feeling in the morning. For this we used again Nalle -cards.

It was important for us to give the participants enough space to articulate their own feelings and also the safety to express them according to their own wishes. Showing a chosen bear card was enough to present actual feelings.

For the warm-up in the morning, we played a game called “Giving you the wink”. (Brander et al. 2004, 184) This game is short and fun for energising a group. The group was divided into two groups; one group had one member less. The smaller group had to sit on chairs in a circle; one extra chair was left empty. The second group stood behind the chairs, one person also stood behind the empty chair. The duty of the person standing behind the empty chair was to “call” by winking someone to the empty chair. The person behind the chair tried to stop the sitting person from moving to the empty chair.

We wanted to maintain a positive group feeling at the beginning of the 2nd day and to get people warmed up in the morning. That is why we thought it would be nice to start the day in a fun way. We believed that starting the day actively together with the whole group would be another way to get in better contact. We, as those who planned the weekend, did not want to be seen differently from other group members. That is why we participated in all the activities the same way as the participants. It was our goal to avoid building barriers between us and the group. The participants should get as much power and control over the situation than we had. (Thompson 1993, 83) A strong group feeling also has an influence on oneself to feel strong and to experience fun with others. Together in partnership and with participation of everyone, processes can be forwarded easier. (Thompson 1998, 212)

After the warm-up, we did a “brainstorming” to get into the topic of the weekend. This method was also familiar for us from our own studies. The method was used to get an easy start into the topics and to have a starting point for a discussion, and to exchange thoughts, feelings and maybe experiences as well. Again the focus on this activity was on expressing oneself, not on how to express.

Especially for the discussion part about personal experiences, it was good to do warm-up games beforehand in order to maintain a good group atmosphere so that everyone can feel safe and want to share their own experiences about these topics. We thought it might be easier to start by defining and discussing the terms before getting into a more practical part of the training.

We thought that brainstorming would be an informal way and better than, for example, only reading definitions of these subjects.

The words “racism” and “discrimination” were written in Finnish on two big papers. The participants were randomly divided into two groups, one group for each word. The groups went to one of the posters to write and draw things that came to their mind about the topics. After a while the groups switched places so that everyone could contribute to both topics. When both groups had written down their thoughts, we discussed and looked into their comments together and also discussed the words; what they mean and what the difference between racism and discrimination is.

To get into the topics “discrimination and racism” more practically, we have planned to do role-plays. We have prepared four cases for the participants, which take place among children and young people in camp settings and are related to racism and discrimination. The participants should get a chance to think actively about the situations in order to create ways to react in racism- and discrimination-typed conflict situations, which could occur among children and/or teenagers in camp settings. Even though Nuoret Kotkat is an organisation which is clearly against any type of discrimination, discrimination can occur within the organisation as well. As Dominelli points out “racism is a socially constructed phenomenon that varies in form over time and different locations.” (1997, 3) Our focus was on empowering the participants to stand actively against any type of discrimination no matter where it occurs. Basically, to help the participants to help themselves is the main factor of empowerment. (Okitikpi & Aymer 2010, 49)

We wanted to discuss together how to respond to discrimination and to get awareness on the fact that discrimination can happen in Nuoret Kotkat camps as well. It is important to discuss and be aware of the existence of discrimination, which gives better possibilities to stand against discrimination.

After reflecting on the situations and on oneself as well, it made it clearer to see what might need improved to react more adequately in situations like these. In general, self-reflection is important when working with others and gives a chance to improve personal practice.

What we did not want to give is a feeling of being afraid of these situations.

The participants should get a feeling that they can be handled, which is a reason why we did the training. We think that concrete methods and ideas can help in situations when discrimination and/or racism occur. Awareness on how discriminative or racist situations can look like and how to identify these are important.

Because of this we wanted to include the participants, also when they are no leaders, so that everyone can do something in a situation when discrimination occurs.

Goals of Nuoret Kotkat are to learn to take others into consideration and to help friends or the people around oneself, and to become an active citizen. (Nuoret Kotkat -English leaflet) Being an active citizen also means standing together and supporting those in need of help.

Further, the already played games should be a base for them to work against discrimination in a group, for example, in camps. The games we have played (“Dominoes, “Giving you the wink”) are methods to bring a group closer and the already implemented games should work as a support for this.

Very important is to stand together against discrimination and racism, which is why it can be beneficial to ask others for help. In situations where discrimination arises it might be frustrating, but it is important to talk about feelings of powerlessness as well. That is why we left enough time for a discussion after presenting the cases. The group was divided into two, one group of camp-leaders and one of participants, each group got two cases according to their position in the camp, either leader or participant.

The groups had time to discuss their cases and to think about a solution how to react which was presented by acting.

After the role-plays we discussed about each case and talked about different ways of reactions.

The cases we have prepared were:

For a better understanding for the participants we have translated the cases into Finnish. (See the Finnish version in appendix 2)

Case 1: You are in a summer camp and part of a group of 13 children/participants, you are about to play football. One boy is chosen (by everyone) to pick the teams. In the end there are 6 players in each team, but one Asian boy is left out. The boy who picked the players says: “You cannot play with us; otherwise the teams will be uneven!” How will you react?

Case 2: You are a participant in a summer camp and witness that two children with immigrant background coming from West- and North-Africa are several times verbally attacked by Finnish boys calling them disrespectfully names in Finnish like “neekeri” and “ählämi”. The boys who are attacked are younger than those who attack them. What will you do?

Case 3: You are a camp leader in a summer camp; a Muslim girl comes to you and tells you that she is teased by other participants because of wearing a scarf and long clothes in the summer. She feels alone and wants to go home. What will you do?

Case 4: You are a camp leader in a summer camp with young persons. You witness several times that one boy is left always alone and no one talks to him. You take the boy by side and ask him how he feels. He tells you that the others do not want to hang out with him because he does not wear cool clothes (the right brands) and does not have a smart phone. What could you do to help him?

In the afternoon, after lunch-break, we played the activity game “Immigration to Europe”. The theme of this play is equality and immigration. The exercise leads the participants through different stages symbolizing different obstacles immigrants face when arriving in a new country.

The participants will have to fulfil a series of tasks representing challenges immigrants face when they try to move to and settle down in a new country.

Some parts of this game were done outside; we wanted to take the chance to be in the nature around the house and to vary the place of event.

We prepared an “obstacle course” with four different tasks. Our role was the administrators, who led the game and explained the different tasks. We decided to speak mainly in English, to give the participants a more real feeling how it is to arrive in a country with a language which is not their mother tongue.

The tasks were:

Task one:

Symbolizing getting to the new country

The players had to overcome an obstacle course which represented arriving to the new country.

The administrators could command players back to the beginning of the course without any reason. The participants should get a feeling how it is to follow rules they may not understand.

Task two:

Receive a work permit and find a job

This task was done outside, the players had to cross a “wall” made of a rope between two trees. They were not allowed to touch the rope.

They could help each other but everyone had limited amount of attempts. The administrators watched their process and took notes how many tries they needed to overcome the wall.

Task three:

War of stamps (advancement in society)

The players were separated into three groups representing different social classes; also this task was fulfilled outside. The groups had two to three different missions to accomplish: Steal flags from the other two groups. Put stamps on a piece of paper from a higher social group in order to advance their level in society and to protect their flag and their sheet from the others.

Task four:

Bureaucracy to receive a resident permit

The players were told by the administrators to take some of their clothes off and to put them all together and order them from dark to light colours.

Then they had to form a word with all their clothes. We decided randomly that they should form the word “kiva” (in Finnish nice) also as a symbolic visit of a language course, which is often part of immigrants’ lives.

The game is over when the group had accomplished all tasks.

After the game we had a discussion with everyone how they felt and experienced the “simulated immigration”.

We wanted to get the participants’ attraction to the point that they get awareness for people’s life stories. For example, when working in a camp children/ teenagers with a migration background might act differently based on their life stories to the natives. This could be a reason why they are often “easy victims” for discrimination among peers. Especially camp leaders should get ideas out of this game how they could address issues like discrimination and institutionalized racism in the daily camp-life or other Nuoret Kotkat activities.

Through an informal way like this game we wanted to get another access to the topic of discrimination. It is important to reflect on discrimination towards immigrants, which might be not obvious for many people. This game can be used in camps or other activities and can be supportive to challenge and empower peers to deal with local or international challenges. (International Falcon Movement - Socialist Educational International. Peers without Frontiers - Youth for MDGs. 2010. 65-66)

Experiencing immigration not only from a theoretical perspective might open the mind and can give an insight how immigrants and refugees or people with a migration background feel.

People arriving in a new country often face authorities and laws without fully understanding what is going on around them. For us without a migration background this experience of oppression might not be easy to understand.

This game should give a chance to undergo experiences and feelings where oppression occurs. It might give a new understanding of people and their life stories. One of Nuoret Kotkat goals is solidarity. (See values of Nuoret Kotkat in appendix 4.) With this game we wanted to give the participants a chance to experience a situation of people they might be solidly united, without having the same life story. For being solidly united it is important to get an insight of the person’s situation you want to be solidary with. (Freire 2006, 49)

After dinner we watched a film called “Freedom Writers”. The movie was about high school students in the United States who assimilate into racial groups in the classroom. Their new, excited young teacher tries to intercept the racist conflicts among the students. The film is based on the book “The Freedom Writers Diary” by teacher Erin Gruwell. The title is a play on the term “Freedom Riders”, referring to the multi-racial civil rights activists who tested the U.S. Supreme Court decision ordering the desegregation of interstate buses in 1961 (IB History 2009).

After the movie we had a discussion how everyone liked the movie and how this could be linked to the topics we have discussed and handled over the day.

One of the messages of this film is to see similarities among a group and to see that everyone is equal and has often similar ideas about life, even on the first look their lives differ a lot. Also our earlier played game (“Dominoes”) had this intention.

Because the age group of the class in the film were close to the teenage participants we thought it will be easier for them to get into the topic and to understand their feelings. It could give a better connection to reality, especially for the younger participants. And also a better connection to people in similar situations as if we would have for example read an article. With watching a film we expected more emotional response. When information is visualized you can expect better attention as, for example, from a book. Pictures are easier to memorize and attract easier the attention as the more formal way of a book. (Deepak & Garcia Biggs 2011, 51-52) Additionally we thought it will be a nice way to end a day full of action.

4.3 Training weekend - 3rd day

On Sunday morning, before the camp ended around noon, we left outside to play the warm-up game “Fruit Salad”. Every participant got a paper which had a different fruit name written on. Then different fruits were called out and participants with the specific fruit had to switch places. When “Fruit Salad” was called, everyone had to switch places. The one, who was left out without a position, was the new caller. The whole weekend we have focused together with the group on the subjects, this game should be a nice ending of the weekend and just to have fun with the group not focusing on a specific subject. We ended the weekend together as we have started it, together as a group. No one should be left out and is an equal part of the group.

Also with an usual warm up game we think promote anti-discriminative values can be promoted and through activities this could even happen more natural than through for example a discussion about this.

Then we were going to have the final feedback session with all participants. We used again the mood cards Nalle Cards and brought back the posters with the expectations written down on Friday evening. We discussed how their expectations matched and how they liked the weekend. We asked questions like: Did you learn something? How do you feel about the activities?

As mentioned in the beginning essential for us was that the participants are active all the time and not passive audience.

Why also critical reflection is an important fact of action, through reflection can be seen what was learned, where were weaknesses and strengths. It is important to be active and self-reflexive. (Thompson 1998, 212)

4.4 International evening on the “International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination”

On Wednesday 21st of March 2012 we had a party to remember the “International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination”. This day was declared by the United Nations (UN) in 1966 for the memory of the massacre in Sharpeville, South Africa, occurred on the 21st of March in 1960. Unarmed, peaceful black South Africans protested against the Apartheid in South Africa and were attacked by the local police. In total, 69 black South Africans lost their lives and at least 180 people including ten children were injured. Most of the victims were shot in the back while fleeing (Russel 2010, 59). This happening gave worldwide attention to South Africa's Apartheid policy. Further, this day was declared by the United Nation to show “a symbol of the worldwide need to end racism” (Toronto district school board).

We wanted to support this intention and get more awareness on the happenings in Sharpeville and to remember as well that there are all over the world still people suffering from racial discrimination. These people, especially the people in our closer environment, make it important to fight actively against discrimination and racism for a more equal world for everybody.

To get more a feeling of party we offered food and drinks and to get in contact with new people.

We had prepared a video with pictures from the weekend to look back to the weekend and to show others, who did not take part, what we have done at the training. This video was made with the intention to have material for Nuoret Kotkat to present themselves and a part of their activities to others. We also gave some background information about the happenings in Sharpeville in 1960.

We had prepared certificates for the participants of the weekend. The certificates showed them respect and reward.

We also wanted to thank them for their active participation. Secondly, we wanted to give the weekend a nice and positive ending. The certificate could also be a motivation to remember to include anti-discriminative and anti-racist ideas into their practice.

5 Evaluation

5.1 Empowerment Evaluation

The method we have chosen to evaluate our project was Empowerment Evaluation. Already while writing the thesis plan we had the idea to have an evaluation session after training weekend and party. This evaluation should be with those camp leaders who took part at the training weekend, party and further helped us beforehand when planning and preparing the activities. For us it was important that the evaluation can happen in an informal way and the method could be implemented in a group. We believe an informal way of evaluation suits best to our project where the focus was set on informal than formal learning.

Empowerment Evaluation was the method we have used for evaluating the thesis project after the implementation. Before implementation when writing the plan we did not follow a specific method, but we have discussed our plan in an informal way.

Empowerment Evaluation is done in a group, because it has only a few individual sequences. The evaluation is mainly based on discussing and reflecting activities and the position oneself hold in the activities.

We have worked together with the volunteers from Nuoret Kotkat already before the weekend while planning.

That is why we thought it would be a positive ending having a feedback session where everyone can participate. A process where everyone should have an active impact and the evaluation is not based on individual feedback.

Empowerment evaluation is a method of evaluation that helps to create an atmosphere of learning and activity. (Fetterman 2001, 38) It is a way to empower oneself while the evaluation and action and to help others evaluating themselves.

Empowerment Evaluation was created inspired by community psychology, action anthropology, and action research. (Fetterman 2001, 10) It is divided into three steps what provides from our view a great variety and a way to keep up everyone's interest. The method conducts of three different steps you have to go through which "are simple and effective." (Fetterman 2001, 41)

The results of the evaluation can be linked to political actions, that is why this method is used especially in connection with working towards social justice.

(Secret & Jordan & Ford 1999 in Health & Social Work 2011)

For us a connection to our project and anti-oppressive practice was important. We thought it would be beneficial to look for an evaluation method which matches with the values of the project, values like equality between us and the participants.

Further, empowerment to unfold own strengths was important. Discussing the project should give everyone a chance to look for improvement and development which are basically important steps of lifelong learning (Fetterman 2001, 34)

The evaluation session is guided by giving instructions about the different steps, which will be described later in this chapter. However, we took part of the evaluation process as the other participants and saw ourselves more as a support, not as experts or leaders. In this evaluation process everyone learns from another, no matter of status or hierarchy. (Fetterman 2001, 35) It is to the core a democratic process (Fetterman 2001, 7) we did not want to occur as leaders while the evaluation.

Empowerment evaluation gave us the chance to determine our ideas of equality; we wanted to work together with the organisation, not for them.

After working together with Nuoret Kotkat we thought there exists a good base of mutual trust and understanding to evaluate the project in a group session. Evaluation means also to leave space for criticism, that we knew each other already was supportive for the process.

While the evaluation everyone can express feelings and should feel secure.

It also gives a chance to look positive towards the future work and to see what could be improved.

We wanted a relaxed atmosphere for the evaluation which Empowerment Evaluation supports. It leaves space for successes and failures, which are part of life and processes. (Fetterman 2001, 6) Positive and negative aspects are asked, but strengths should be found and to be in the centre to motivate for the future. Participants should learn to take responsibility for their own actions.

We knew already before what we wanted to implement with this project and did precise planning to offer a good project with high quality.

The first step is about developing a mission or vision statement about the program (in our case the project) or results that should be seen as an outcome of the project. The mission statements are written down as key phrases and have to be accepted by everyone.

The second step is to take stock. In this phase the most important program activities are identified and prioritized. Weaknesses of the project might be identified as well. All participants rate the implementation, one (low) to ten (high) on a scale to order activities from most to least important. The voting can happen for example with dots (stickers) which are put next to the mission statements; this makes it easy to identify favourites. Rating is done individually; in the end is a group discussion. It is important that everyone gets a chance to decide individually how to rate activities in order to articulate later own thoughts about the project.

Taking stock happens openly, when putting the dots to the activities with the chance of a “democratic flow” (Fetterman 2001, 27) and communication between the participants.

After rating, results are discussed, most important part of this evaluation's method is dialogue. The method is not about confidentiality, more about active interaction. A discussion makes everything clearer and gives chances to clarify ideas, thoughts and ratings. Asking about ratings helps to find something positive; this is the idea behind this method. After rating, the group discusses about these, why participants gave different ratings for specific points. This gives ground for the next level, which is planning the future.

In the third step goals and strategies how to achieve and develop further ideas for the future are set. Plans could be made how to establish and determine goals in the future.

For example, brainstorming could be used to find goals. The goals should be related to program and activities. The goals should be not long-term, achievable and linked to daily activities. It was our concern that Nuoret Kotkat keeps up activities against racism and discrimination in the future, to improve this work we felt that Empowerment Evaluation is a way to reflect past activities and to see how to improve and plan future work.

5.2 Evaluation findings

The evaluation happened after implementing our activities, the training weekend about anti-racism and discrimination and the party on the “International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination”. The evaluation was done together with leaders from Nuoret Kotkat who helped us when planning our project and took part of all the activities. In this way their reflections present experiences of the participants at the activities as well as the working life partner's side. Because we also took actively part of the evaluation session, the findings represent our reflections too.

The method is based on three steps which helped us to evaluate step by step the project's activities. The informal touch this method has provided a relaxed atmosphere for our evaluation meeting. In this chapter we are going to describe how the evaluation meeting went and we will present findings of our discussion. We only explain the method briefly; a more detailed explanation is to find in the former chapter.

The three steps of empowerment evaluation are: defining a mission statement (in our case we stated main ideas of the project), taking stock and rating the activities of the project. Empowerment Evaluation is a quintessentially forwarding process; all steps are forwarding the evaluation ending with a look to the future. The last step is to discuss the future, if there should be a continuation of the project. If so, how the working life will continue the project or ideas.

In our mind the most beneficial part of empowerment evaluation is the fact that we could do it in a group with volunteers. It gave a nice ending to the project and everyone a chance to rethink the project.

Additionally, the third step of evaluation offers the chance to look into the future to see how the project ideas' could be further developed.

To lighten reading this chapter we decided by writing volunteers we mean those leaders of Nuoret Kotkat who took part of the evaluation process and the project implementation. By leaders we refer in this chapter to all leaders who participated at the weekend and party, including those who took and did not take part of the evaluation.

We wanted to use a method which is based on an informal way and we could use for an evaluation in a group setting. In our mind empowerment evaluation is the perfect way to give a frame to an informal evaluation session. The activities we have planned for the weekend and international evening were based on the theories anti-discriminative practice and anti-oppressive practice. Empowerment Evaluation was a great support for us and we actually could find many elements of the used theories in the evaluation process. Especially points of partnership and inclusion were visible. Participants should be included into the process; their concerns are in the centre. While the evaluation session our position was not to lead but more to guide and enable the volunteers to have a progressing process. Especially because we took part we could continue the partnership we have followed over the whole thesis project. Important for us was that we can take part of the evaluation the same way as the volunteers without being too much distracted to bring the discussion forward. The three steps of the method brought the discussion forward. The informal aspect of empowerment evaluation gave us the feeling that we were not overtaking the discussion and gave enough space to the leaders.

In the beginning of the evaluation we started to explain roughly the method and described the three steps we will undergo. The volunteers seemed interested; we as well looked positively forward to use the method. Secondly, we were interested to find out how the method will work, because we have not worked with it before.

The first step of empowerment evaluation is defining together in the group a mission or mission statements which describe the project. We discussed and found together statements which present the project and its goals, these were accepted by everyone. It is important that everyone agrees with the statements. If not, it needed to be discussed how the statements could be changed to please everyone.

We discussed what was in our mind important about the project and which ideas stand behind the activities. Our statements were written down as short notes on a paper visible for everyone.

In the end we came up with these statements, which were not yet rated:

- awareness of racism for everyone
- training focused on anti-racism and discrimination for camp leaders and young persons
- taking anti-racism and anti-discrimination more active into the organisation's activities
- outside presentation of Nuoret Kotkat

After we have set the statements we discussed each statement briefly. To see what were our ideas behind the activities we had planned. The volunteers thought about these statements and how they supported the project and ideas.

In the following section of this chapter we will discuss each of the statements in more detail and present our ideas behind them, we have talked while the evaluation.

Statement one: Awareness of racism for everyone

It is important that everyone becomes aware of racism. At some point this topic touches all of our lives, directly or indirectly. No one should close one's eyes to say it does not concern one's life. It is important for everyone to take these issues into active consideration. This is especially of great importance for the organisation and its members, because it touches actively the Nuoret Kotkat values of equality and fairness. It is important to accept diversity and to promote these as well. Only through accepting these differences discrimination can be overcome by acting actively against it.

The volunteers highlighted that we had a good approach to handle the topic of racism. We did activities like brainstorming and an activity game which offered the participants a chance to think about racism and what it means for their lives. Especially the discussions after the activities left space for exchanging experiences and discussing.

Statement two: training focused on anti-racism and discrimination for camp leaders and young persons

Nuoret Kotkat frequently organises trainings for their members. Trainings are important in preparing leaders and young persons for helping in camps and other Nuoret Kotkat activities.

Many of the leaders have already helped at the activities for many years and participated at many trainings to update their knowledge. To keep their attention and interest in order to learn further, it is good to vary the topics of the trainings. Racism and discrimination are actual topics; these issues could occur at Nuoret Kotkat activities as well. Through choosing one specific topic for the training where it can be handled over several days, gives a chance to go more deep into a topic and to bring it closer to the participants. The volunteers said that these topics are important and offer such a wide range of activities, that a weekend is almost too short.

For an organisation like Nuoret Kotkat which works with children and young people, it is a great matter to respond to actual topics and to consider these into their work. Through trainings on how to handle racism and discrimination leaders and young people can bring topics and ideas better into activities in the future.

The society is changing, more and more discrimination occurs, for example, based on economical inequalities. The purpose of this training was also to learn to identify discrimination in order to be able to stand more actively against it. We wanted to support the leaders to be prepared for situations like these and to promote work against discrimination and racism.

Statement three: Taking anti-racism and anti-discrimination more actively into the organisation's activities

Promoting equality and anti-discrimination are a big part of the organisation's work. However, it is important to take these topics even more into consideration.

The training weekend was meant to give the group leaders and young persons' ideas on how to include these topics actively into their work. For Nuoret Kotkat it is beneficial to focus on new topics for their trainings.

The volunteers said that the activities around the training gave them a good starting point from where they can plan other activities around these topics.

Even though they all know that racism and discrimination are important topics, Nuoret Kotkat had never activities that only focused on these topics. That is why our intention was that based on the project, activities concerning racism and discrimination will be planned constantly.

No one should be left out and everyone should be included into the activities; even though there might be differences in economic background, which is why it is good that activities Nuoret Kotkat are open for everyone regardless of personal background. Leaders and young people helping in the camps need to be flexible in order to answer to societal changes which are also visible in their activities. Through promoting equality and a non-discriminative attitude, which are parts of the organisation's values, changes in the children's lives could occur.

Statement four: Outside presentation of Nuoret Kotkat

Surely the presentation of Nuoret Kotkat to outsiders is important. The organisation can present its values and what kind of activities it does and who is the target group. Besides a presentation to outsiders, who might be interested to get to know more about Nuoret Kotkat, it is nice for actual members to see and hear what happens within the organisation. Nuoret Kotkat exists all over Finland and many activities are offered in different areas. In the member magazine, "Kotkaviestä", members are informed of what Nuoret Kotkat organised in the different districts and upcoming events are announced. The magazine is given to members or handed out at activities.

We wrote an article for the magazine about the training weekend and the party. The article should give people an idea about the project. For the party on the 21st of March we did a video of the training weekend.

(See appendix 5 for the article in Finnish and appendix 6 for the English version of this article.)

We wanted to show others, who did not take part in the training, what we had done. Already in the beginning when talking about the project idea, we mentioned that we would like to produce material for Nuoret Kotkat which they could show to others, like an article, pictures, and a video. The organisation was really happy about this. They always need material for their member magazine or web page. Video and the

article were created in order to help present the organisation's activities to others. The organisation promotes equality and should show this through their activities. Additionally, through this the organisation's values can be presented and a clear statement against discrimination is given.

At the evaluation session the volunteers thanked us for the material we had provided, the article, the pictures, and the video about the weekend. These help them a lot in the continuing work on these topics.

The party on the 21st of March 2012 on the "International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination" was part of this outside presentation, too. In particular, we invited people who did not know much/anything about the organisation. We wanted to bring different kinds of people together. It was nice to have guests who did not know about Nuoret Kotkat and got new information on that evening.

When writing down the statements we could see that our ideas behind our project were accepted by the volunteers

In the second step we took stock, which means to rate the project's activities. First we wrote down all the activities we did on the weekend and at the party. In the end, thirteen activities were written down, quite a large number of activities. We decided commonly to reduce the list to make it easier to rate. In the end, all the activities of the party were combined to the point "party" and different warming up games became one point as well. It was agreed that this modification leaves us more space to discuss and rate each activity in more detail.

Activities of the weekend: (After the modification)

- "The Bears - Nallekortit" (Nalle cards)
- Brainstorming
- Role plays and cases
- Movie "Freedom Writers"
- Warming up games (including the games: "Fruit salad", "Dominoes", "Giving you the wink")
- Immigration to Europe activity game
- Feedback round

-Party on the “International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination” on 21st March 2012

After going through the list again, it was decided to pick out five activities of the list and to define a “Top 5”. It was agreed that this selection gives a better chance for all of us to concentrate on the most liked activities than if we would have discussed all nine points.

For us it was a positive process that the volunteers had ideas on how to modify the evaluation according to one's own needs. Surely it was better to focus more on few activities than on many points without going deeply into a discussion. This is also a part of empowerment evaluation, being flexible and responding to requests. We felt very secure using this method and could see how it leaves enough space for modification and responding to clients' needs, like a modification of the list of activities into a “Top 5”. It left a good feeling to see that we had chosen a method which matched our purpose and that the volunteers responded actively to it.

Rating of the “Top 5” happened personally on papers. It was good to have a personal section as well.

In the end our “Top 5” was:

1. Nalle Cards
2. Brainstorming
3. Party (we took it all together, whole happening)
4. Cases and role plays
5. Immigration game

Now we are going to discuss every point of the “Top 5” list more detailed, in the order they have been ranked. We will present findings we have talked about at the evaluation.

Top 1: Nalle Cards

Nalle Cards are pictures with teddy bears who present different kind of emotions, these cards are good for showing others feelings and emotions without verbal communication, if this was not wanted.

Already when we started the weekend with the Nalle Cards everyone was excited about them and liked them right away. They asked already to begin where these cards can be bought.

The volunteers said they did something similar with postcards on earlier occasions. However, it was agreed that these cards are definitely better to use and offer a better variation of feelings and are easy to understand, also without reading. The volunteers said they could imagine to use the cards on own planned activities as well, especially because they are good to use in many age groups.

As mentioned everyone liked to use the cards and took actively part. We used Nalle Cards always when starting the program, on Friday evening, Saturday morning and so on. This gave a routine and a relaxed starting for everyone; it was known that we will open the day with the Nalle Cards.

Because no verbal expression was needed, everyone could take part as he wanted to, with or without communication. This was especially helpful at the beginning of the weekend when the group just found together. We were happy to hear that the method was so commonly appreciated.

Top 2: Brainstorming

This activity was liked because of the fact that it is simple, not much material is needed, besides paper and pens. However, this method is very effective to enter a new topic.

Brainstorming is good to start a discussion and to hear other's opinions and knowledge about a topic. This method is a chance to ask about the topic and to see from where to start going into a task or activity.

Another positive factor is that it could be used in many different settings and that it is applicable for any topic.

Top 3: Party on the “International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination”

On the 21st of March 2012 we had an international evening to remember the “International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination” and to present what we have done at the weekend.

The party evaluated as a whole was experienced as a good ending of the weekend. It gave a chance to review the training. Those who did not come to the weekend could

get to know what we have done at the training because of the video we showed and we talked about the weekend.

The volunteers liked the video a lot and said it showed that the weekend and party belonged together as one part. At the party we talked about the massacre on Sharpeville in South Africa which happened to be on the 1960. Based on the happening on this day the UN declared in 1966 this day to be the “International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination”. This information was new for many of the guests. The volunteers said that besides the cake and music we had to offer also a section with input and they liked this variety. It was good that we offered a varied program and the guests could also gain knowledge at the party.

Sadly only a few guests came to the party. The volunteers said that this happens a lot and it is not based on “us”, but could be due to the fact the party was in the week or other factors. But we all commonly agreed it is always nicer to have a few interested guests than many who do not care about the input.

The certificates we gave out for weekend's participants were much appreciated.

On the certificates it was written that they took part of the weekend training about anti-discrimination and anti-racism. The volunteers liked the idea to reward them, also because the certificates could be useful for a CV, for example. They said that especially young persons are always happy to get a reward after a project they took part; this motivates them to be more active in the future.

(See appendix 3 for the certificate.)

Top 4: Cases

We had prepared different scenarios which could happen in a camp of Nuoret Kotkat. There were two cases for leaders and two cases for young persons. In groups they should discuss possible ways how to react in such situations.

The cases can be found in chapter 3.

The volunteers liked the idea and found all cases were well thought. They said that cases like these could happen. Already on the training weekend participants named actual examples. Because these scenarios could happen all the time it was considered a good way to practice.

It was a training weekend and it was beneficial to have a practical section as well. The cases offered concrete situations that the participants could think how to react in certain situations and how to manage situations where discrimination occurs. The volunteers liked that they had to imagine how it would be for people to be in one of the described situation and to find a solution from this point of view. We all commonly agreed that one part of the leaders who took part of this activity acted childish and did not contribute much to this activity. They did not show much effort to present solutions for their cases. Further they did not take the opportunity to think how they could react in similar situations. The volunteers pointed out that these participants do not know how they could react in a similar situation happening in a camp. These leaders got a chance to try out ideas and to discuss these, but did not take it. They were not concentrated and it made it hard to keep the whole group motivated. The volunteers told that similar problems arose already in the past with the same participants and they talked with them already many times.

The young persons on the other hand were concentrated and contributed good solutions to their cases. The volunteers suggested that a mix of the age group could have been a good solution.

However, we discussed as well that the positions of young persons and leaders in camps are different why it is good that we had cases according to their position in camps. In general, the cases were liked and it was mentioned that they could be used again in another setting. This practical training was seen as important and could be trained again.

Top 5: Immigration to Europe activity game

Immigration to Europe is an activity game based on different tasks the group has to undergo; some parts are done together, some in smaller groups and some individually. The idea behind the tasks is to simulate an immigration process to an European country.

We have never played this game, so it was completely new and we were curious to see how it will work out. Everyone took actively part and we all played together. The activities were about physical action as well which gave a good variety to the activities we did inside. Because the game consisted of different tasks it did not get boring.

It was good to be physically active on the weekend aside from much sitting and discussions. Some parts outside were played outside, this gave a chance to use the great outside space around the house.

Besides it was a fun game, the participants had to think what stands behind the different tasks. It was good that we had a discussion afterwards to clarify the tasks and to exchange feelings and thoughts about the game. The volunteers said they missed actual facts about immigration in Finland, which would have supported the discussion. We said that we actually had prepared a power point about this, but felt the participants were too tired to go much deeper into the topic. Especially because some participants were less active than others while the discussion. It showed us that it is really important to take time for the debriefing after the game, maybe also grounded on some facts concerning the topic.

Everyone worked well together and took actively part at the game. Particularly at those tasks when they had to work in a group to overcome an obstacle. It is a good game to play in a big group, they get a chance to play and be together. Everyone has a chance to participate.

The volunteers liked the idea that the players have to experience the situation of immigrants who come to a new country with a system they do not fully understand. It is good to get a chance to understand other people's background better, particularly, because many of the participants of Nuoret Kotkat activities have different life stories.

In the end, the third and last step of the evaluation we had to consider the future. This is an important and good way to forward ideas and to see if the project can be taken further.

We discussed where to go and how to forward anti-racism and anti-discrimination into Nuoret Kotkat activities. The volunteers said that they want to do more about these topics and want to include these better into their work. Further they said as already mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, these topics are so diversified that only one weekend training is not enough. More training on weekends or even a longer camp about anti-racism and discrimination could be an idea in order to have enough time to handle these topics.

The volunteers emphasised that volunteer organisations need new faces. For kids it might be better to have known leaders. But for teenagers it is good to get to know new people. It is important for them to hear new ideas and to interact with other people as always with known camp leaders who often do the same activities. The ideas are also helpful for old leaders. A variation is good for all members of Nuoret Kotkat to update the practice all the time.

Everyone liked the idea to do something within the Action Weeks Against Racism in 2013 as well. These weeks offer a good frame for activities about these topics. The ideas were that next year a party could be the more central activity of these weeks. The training weekend could be left out or organized as a one day seminar. The focus on the party could be more on addressing many people and age groups. The guests could be also families and kids, not only young persons and leaders. The offered activities should be interesting for all of them. The volunteers from Nuoret Kotkat definitely want to keep up the activities within these weeks about the topics anti-racism and discrimination but also include them into activities over the whole year.

5.3 Lara's reflection on the thesis process

I am personally very happy how well the whole project implementation went. Even we only had about two months to write the thesis plan and to prepare training weekend and international evening we created a reasoned plan. While the implementation I could see that our ideas made sense and fulfilled the idea to realize a training weekend for leaders and young persons of Nuoret Kotkat.

Before the weekend I was not sure how the different activities will be implemented since most of them, like the action game Immigration to Europe were new for us. Now after the implementation I think the best way to get to know new working methods is to try them out. In the end it went really well with all chosen activities and everyone got to know new activities.

While the planning process I felt much supported by our working life partner Nuoret Kotkat. They gave me the feeling that we can always turn on them, if support is needed. I felt especially supported in that way, that we could plan freely the whole weekend and party because the organisation offered us enough space and time.

I was really happy to hear how excited Nuoret Kotkat were about the project beforehand what was definitely a big motivation for me.

After the project implementation it was nice to hear such positive feedback, it gave me the feeling that the plan we have done worked out. I have been doing for many years volunteer work for the German partner organisation SJD - die Falken.

I personally could clearly see similarities of these organisations and was happy to contribute actively to the Finnish organisation's work. One aspect I recognized already at former activities of Nuoret Kotkat I have visited and in my years working with SJD- die Falken is that you have enough space to implement own ideas. The organisation works more as an enabler to help you to implement own ideas. It was good to know that we can plan our project independently and the organisation does not give us any limits, but there is help if needed.

What I learned about the whole thesis process is definitely that the theory is an important factor. The theory supports the work and acts as a base of all later work. It was good to get to know the theories anti-oppressive practice and anti-discriminative practice more detailed before starting to plan the weekend's activities. After reading and when planning I could always go back to the theory and orientate myself to it. I am also happy with the evaluation method we have used. First I was sceptically if we can find one which matches our needs, because we wanted an informal evaluation session. Now after the evaluation, I think empowerment evaluation was really helpful because of the three steps to follow.

It gave the meeting we had with the volunteers from Nuoret Kotkat a good frame and worked as a guide through evaluating the project. I can imagine using this method in other occasions as well because it helps to evaluate a project step by step.

I personally enjoyed the writing process as well, because I like to write and I enjoy this kind of theoretical work. It gave a good variation to the more practical part of the thesis. However I also saw difficulties, when doing the writing in a pair. It is not always easy to find a good balance of the workload and to organise the writing process that everyone contributes equal to the outcome. On the other hand, I think for the implementation of the project doing it in a pair was really beneficial. It was good to do it together; I guess it would have been hard for only one person to lead through the whole program. At the weekend and party I felt more secure to do it in a pair and to have a person where I can turn to and discuss.

At the weekend and party the participants had all, besides a few exceptions a positive attitude which made it much easier for me to start. It felt good to see that our activities are accepted and participants were motivated the whole weekend.

It motivated me to speak Finnish, at the weekend we did all conversations and discussions in Finnish. Besides it was challenging it was also a good training for me. The group was nice and open why I did not feel any shyness and just spoke without thinking if I make a mistake or chose a wrong word.

I am really looking forward for the next year to do again activities within the Action Weeks Against Racism together with Nuoret Kotkat!

5.4 Outi's reflection on the thesis process

Along this thesis project I have gained more self-confidence and know-how. Also, my knowledge and awareness of different theories and working- and evaluation methods have increased a lot. This project has also strengthened my trust in myself as a social work professional.

Doing an action-based thesis project suited me better than doing a research-based project because I have always enjoyed more physical action more than reading from books. Additionally, during my whole studies in the University of Applied Sciences, one of the things I have learnt of myself is that I learn better by doing.

Our working life partner Nuoret Kotkat also had an outstanding role in my personal motivation during this project. The organisation offered a really great chance to put our thesis project plan into practice. Nuoret Kotkat offered us as well a very pleasant, multi-function ground where to implement our planned project, their owned summer camp area, Kankaan Torppa.

The volunteers of the organisation were always willing to help us, whether it was about the materials needed for the training weekend or the participants of the whole project. Nevertheless, the organisation gave us enough freedom to plan and perform our work, which made me feel that Nuoret Kotkat truly trusts us and I gained more self-confidence.

Nuoret Kotkat is a very flexible and great co-operation partner, and I felt that they had a really positive and effective impact on our project, both in the planning and implementation phases.

I feel that one of the most important things that I learned during this thesis project was the fact that everything does not always actualize as planned and you cannot even always plan everything beforehand. That is why it is important to learn to be flexible in all situations.

As our activities for the training weekend, we chose both familiar and unfamiliar games. We took the risk knowing that some of the games, which even we had ever tried before, might not work as planned, for example, the “Immigration to Europe” - game. But in the end, the whole training weekend went approximately as planned, even though there were some minor changes in the schedule and planned program. When working on a large project like thesis, from my point of view, it is important to have a partner you can trust on and you know each other well already.

Since we have been studying together in the same class for the last three years, we knew how to communicate without major conflicts and were more familiar with each other’s strength and weaknesses.

The feedback, both positive and negative, from the participants of the training weekend was valuable, because it was constructive. The participants honestly shared their feedback with us, telling which activities worked and which they did not understand and/or did not like. The positive feedback gave the feeling of success but the negative feedback taught me more, personally.

The whole project, both the training weekend and the International Evening, was educational, not just for the participants of Nuoret Kotkat, but for me as well.

I sincerely hope that our cooperation with Nuoret Kotkat will continue in the future.

6 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues were important for us and carefully considered over the whole thesis process, especially in the implementation period when we were in actual contact with the participants. Being aware of ethical issues was particularly important because they go with the theoretical background of anti-oppressive practice and anti-discriminative practice and subjects discrimination and anti-racism of our project.

We aimed to have a partnership with the participants. Further, we wanted an equal and open atmosphere as a base for the whole project. Our goal was to work with the participants.

They should be active partners of the project and we did not want to have control over them. To “give priority to maintaining the best interests” (Lob-Hüdepohl & Lesch ed. 2007, 366) of the participants was important and we tried to maintain their best interest when planning and implementing our project. Respecting the clients and treated them with respect should always be the key principle (Royal College of Nursing 2011, 4) and we followed this over the whole process.

At the beginning of the training weekend we introduced ourselves and told the participants that we are writing our thesis based on this training weekend. Our goal was to inform the participants best way possible and over the weekend offering enough space for questions, concerns and suggestions. We wanted to give the participants a feeling of being heard if needed.

We informed the participants that we will take notes over the weekend, what should not distract them. The profession is responsible to inform the participants beforehand about any activity (Royal College of Nursing 2011, 9), even though our client contact did not require much personal contact and very sensitive information were not shared. We wanted to let the participants know that we will use their information carefully. When mentioning the participants in our thesis they are never named by names in order to identify them. The participants’ privacy is kept all the time and background information of them did not matter for us. Treating them with respect and dignity was always important for us.

Additionally, we thought showing respect and interest will motivate them to take actively part, because everyone should participate voluntarily. We told that their active participation is appreciated and beneficial for our thesis project. In our opinion we should promote the values anti-discrimination and anti-racism, particularly because the training weekend was about the values.

Besides Friday evening, in the beginning of every activity we explained what we are going to do and what will happen next. We knew that it is our responsibility to inform them about the activities in order to let them fully understand each activity and its content.

We believe through giving information we maintained trustworthiness because the participants could better understand what happens during the weekend,

particularly because this weekend consisted of activities which required attention and participation. Through understanding a process we hoped the participants gained safety to engage actively into the weekend's activities.

Before the training weekend a camp letter was sent to all participants. Besides roughly presenting the weekend's subject it was mentioned that we are going to take pictures which we will use for our thesis and media presentation. It gave also parents of the under-aged participants the chance to acknowledge this and to possibly forbid taking pictures of their child. However, at the beginning of the training we had informed the participants again about photographing on the weekend. Informed consent will always be signed before any action starts. This is why we had informed the participants already in the camp letter about photographing and the project in general. Informed content is originally a tool from medicine and healthcare, but it is nowadays commonly used in social work as well. (Reamer 2003, 1) We believe based on this act of respect we could build a partnership on-going over the whole project time.

Informed consent means caring of the participant's needs and their concerns come first, we wanted to treat them like individuals and respect their dignity. (Nursing and Midwifery Council 2008 found in Royal College of Nursing 2011, 7)

Taking pictures was a big part for us to document the weekend later in a video and an article for the Nuoret Kotkat member magazine "Kotkaviestit". In addition, we wanted to use these pictures for our thesis presentation. Besides informing the participants about the weekend's program, we asked for their permission to take pictures of them.

We wanted to put participants' needs and feelings in the centre, especially because teenagers participated and we were not sure how they feel about being photographed.

After the introduction on Friday evening we handed out a paper to everyone where they could sign the permission for us to take pictures. (See appendix 1.)

Even though some participants had attended many activities of Nuoret Kotkat and knew already that pictures are often taken, it was important for us to let them sign the informed consent form to state that we are allowed to take pictures of them during the weekend. In this way we could show respect and that we treat every

participant with dignity. Our purpose was not to use pictures of them without their permission. We also informed them that signing the form is totally voluntarily without any pressure. On the form was mentioned as well the specific time (the time of the training weekend) when we would take pictures. Before they could sign we explained the form and how we would use the pictures, that the participants were fully informed about the process.

7 Discussion

The purpose of this project was to generate anti-racist awareness among volunteers of the children and youth organisation Nuoret Kotkat. A training weekend about the themes anti-racism and discrimination for group leaders and young persons was organised and implemented within the Action Weeks against Racism in mid-March 2012. Further an international evening on the “International Day for the Elimination of Racial discrimination”, which takes annually place on the 21st of March was arranged.

The intention of the activities was to become more aware of the existence of racism and discrimination and to set an active sign against racism. Many participants of Nuoret Kotkat activities are children or youth who have a migration background. This makes it even more important to sensitize everyone for situation where discrimination occurs.

The volunteers should get ideas on how to include anti-racist and anti-discriminative practice into their work. However, before getting into practice it is important to become aware of discrimination in order to begin a “process of challenging and confronting discrimination”. (Thompson 1997, 158) The training was meant to empower the participants to deal more confident with challenges like racism that could occur in their practice. Already on the first evening of the training weekend the participants told that they were right away interested about the weekend when they heard about the topics we will work on.

The training weekend and international evening should be seen as a point from where Nuoret Kotkat can start including anti-racism and anti-discrimination more actively into their work.

The organisation speaks out clearly against racism and any kind of discrimination, which is why it is good to emphasize these current topics.

Already in the beginning of the weekend the participants stated that they can see how actual topics racism and discrimination are. Basically everyone could share own experiences and feelings of discrimination. This underlines the importance of including awareness of these topics into their practice. Racism does not only occur among Neo-Nazi organisations and far-right wing parties. Nowadays it cannot be only named racism. People call their racist opinions anti-terrorism or immigration policy and make it acceptable by a wider range of the society. (Ramberg (ed.) 2006, 37)

Racism as well as discrimination appears on different levels, on the personal as well as on the institutional. That is why discrimination and racism are a big part of many people's daily lives. People face (racial) discrimination in their free-time as well as in contact with authorities.

Surely there exist motivations to fight racism and discrimination. However stronger awareness of the existence of discrimination and racism is still needed. When working with people as social workers or volunteers it is essential to understand what is going on in the society. This understanding makes it possible to respond adequately to clients' needs. The training weekend gave the chance to get in contact with others and encounter together actively the social environment (Thompson 1997, 31) which sadly too often reveals racism.

The training weekend for group leaders and young persons from Nuoret Kotkat was a good way to reach other people outside the social work profession. Anyone working or just interacting with others cannot consider themselves as those who only observe events, they have to be active and become active parts of the change they expect from their clients and their environment. "Moving behind racial frames of interpretation is not a medical but a cultural and political project." (Rattansi 2007, 173) Acting non-racist is not enough to challenge racism, but professionals should be clearly anti-racist (Thompson 1998, 95). But not only social work professionals need awareness. Everyone in contact with other people should be aware of these issues. Anti-racist social work should never be seen as something extra, it has to be considered as a fundamental part of social work and never as something that is isolated from practice. (Thompson 1997, 72)

In the implementation phase many methods were used. This provided variety and kept the participants' interest. However, using too many methods was avoided in order not to confuse the participants.

All activities during the weekend and international evening were based on the theories anti-oppressive practice (AOP) and anti-discriminative practice (ADP). The activities were planned and chosen in order to reflect these theories. Especially the aspects of partnership and equality formed the project. The theories were of great importance and supported the positive outcome of the project immensely.

After the implementation an evaluation session with volunteers of Nuoret Kotkat who helped organising and participated in the activities took place. The evaluation method for this session was empowerment evaluation. This method supported very well the ideas of anti-oppressive practice and anti-discriminative practice in this step of the thesis process as well. Empowerment evaluation is a democratic evaluation process and happens in a group. In this group process success and failures can be shared and discussed as well. This is an important part of any kind of group work and co-operation. Any kind of project or co-operation offers positive and negative aspects and to discuss these is essential for the learning process as well. (Fetterman 2001, 6)

It was important that every step of the thesis project could be connected to anti-oppressive practice and anti-discriminative practice.

Anti-oppressive practice puts the clients in the centre and it is important to work in partnership with the clients. As already mentioned in this project partnership was important. It started with the co-operation with the working life partner Nuoret Kotkat and the training weekend where together with the participants activities were implemented. In the end the evaluation was carried out together with volunteers in a group meeting. Partnership could be seen as essential and visible over the whole thesis project. Discussions at the weekend and at the evaluation gave chances for everyone to speak out and hear others' opinions. Through active conversations one's own reflexivity could be trained as well, which is important to develop in one's own practice.

Partnership made it possible to have an atmosphere of equality. AOP has equality as a goal and it is important to promote this clearly in every activity. To forward a process successfully it is better to work as a team and act together.

In order to understand what discrimination and oppression mean it is of importance to understand the concept of power and how it works. A good example from the trainings' activities was the game "immigration to Europe". (Chapter 4.2

It was a chance to experience how it could feel to be in the situation of people who experience powerlessness and oppression. An activity like this makes it easier to gain the ability to identify racism and discrimination. Through awareness raising and personal experiences it becomes easier to understand others' situations. (Dominelli 2008, 77) You cannot stand against discrimination and racism without understanding their functions and influences on people. That is why one needs awareness in order to stand actively against it.

Nuoret Kotkat offers activities for all children, where no one is left out. Sadly nowadays many people are excluded based on their economic or cultural background. It is good that Nuoret Kotkat's activities are open for everyone and that they clearly speak out against any kind of discrimination. Children and young people can learn actively what it means to stand together and form a unity. Together with their members the organisation can promote a future without discrimination and exclusion.

In the end of the weekend an informal feedback round was organized, where the participants could express their thoughts about the training. They were asked to write down or draw their opinions on big posters and later these were discussed together.

The amount of participants at the weekend was smaller as expected. However, in the end this came out as very positive and supportive for the group process. The group came fast together and formed a relationship based on partnership for the weekend. In the feedback round especially the positive atmosphere was emphasized.

It was stated that the weekend was experienced as interesting and positive. The group came along well, with only a few conflicts which concerned the free time and not the activities themselves. Solidarity was important too, we did everything together in the group and helped each other. A group consisting of different people always reveals differences and these should be accepted. Out of this acceptance a society open for everyone can grow.

The contact with the participants was from the beginning very good. A reason might be the fact that the volunteers helping us during planning were also participants at the weekend. Clients were well reached, because of the double position of some of the volunteers, representing the working life partner and being participants at the same time. In this way activities were designed to match with clients' needs. The positive client contact was definitely beneficial for implementation and atmosphere.

Also in free-time phases for example in the evening the group sat together and played cards and just enjoyed to be among others.

Practically all chosen activities were liked. The variety of the activities was well received and the effort to also implement some outdoor activities was appreciated. The participants said that the variety was nice, because it did not get boring and they did not feel like they are in school.

In addition to different activities, some of the participants expected more concrete content about the topics discrimination and racism. Some of the participants felt that the topics were only addressed superficially. This is surely true, but a weekend is also a short period of time where only a small portion of a big topic can be addressed. This is definitely another reason to take these activities as only a starting point for more actions. This lead again to the suggestion as already mentioned in chapter 5 to have a longer training in the future about these topics.

According to the findings the participants considered the training weekend as very important and supportive for their later work. The project gave the working life partner Nuoret Kotkat a starting point from where to do more about these topics. The project was very successful, there were interested participants who took active part. Everyone agreed that it is nicer to have a productive time with a small group than a training with many participants who are not motivated to take part.

It was learned that a good plan is a great support and that positive clients motivate a lot. By reading different theories it could be seen how important anti-racist social work is. It is important to become active and hopefully this project will be only a beginning for further actions against racism. The positive feedback of the working life partner leads to the assumption that the organisation will work further with these topics. For future activities it might be good to vary the activities and to consider the “Action Weeks Against Racism” more concretely. These weeks were only a frame work and not much in the centre of the activities and occasionally they were left out.

All in all, this Bachelor's thesis reached its aim and the whole project showed very well how important it is to take anti-racism and discrimination into active consideration.

During the project it was seen that Thompson (1998, 212-213) was right because it need partnership and active participation when working together in order to address and achieve goals together.

It is important to work together and to exchange with others. Through communication bias can be overcome and alliances can be made. "The Human rights Education Youth Programme places discrimination and xenophobia among the most common forms of violations of fundamental human rights in Europe today." (Ramberg ed. 2006, 13) This makes it important that everyone knows about the importance of standing actively against any kind of discrimination and helping others to become active.

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Laurea Otaniemi

Appendices

Appendix 1

Permission to photograph

SUOSTUMUS KUVAAMISEEN & VIDEOINTIIN

Paikka: Nuorten Kotkien vertsukoulutusviikonloppu Kankaan Torpassa 16.3.-18.3.2012

Opinnäytetyön tekijät: Lara-Elain Bernhauser & Outi Pätsi

Olemme social services -opiskelijoita Otaniemen Laureasta ja suunnittelemme ja toteutamme Nuorten Kotkien vertsukoulutusviikonlopun opinnäytetyötämme varten.

Annan suostumukseni siihen, että minusta saa ottaa kuvia ja/tai videotallenteita viikonlopun aikana kyseistä opinnäytetyötä varten.

Olen tietoinen myös siitä, että suostumukseni ei aiheuta minulle minkäänlaisia kustannuksia, henkilöllisyyteni jää vain opinnäytetyön tekijöiden tietoon ja minua koskeva aineisto hävitetään opinnäytetyön valmistuttua.

Lara-Elain Bernhauser

Outi Pätsi

Allekirjoituksellani annan suostumukseni valokuvien ja/tai videotallenteiden ottoa ja käyttöä varten.

Päiväys

Osallistujan allekirjoitus ja nimenselvennys

Appendix 2

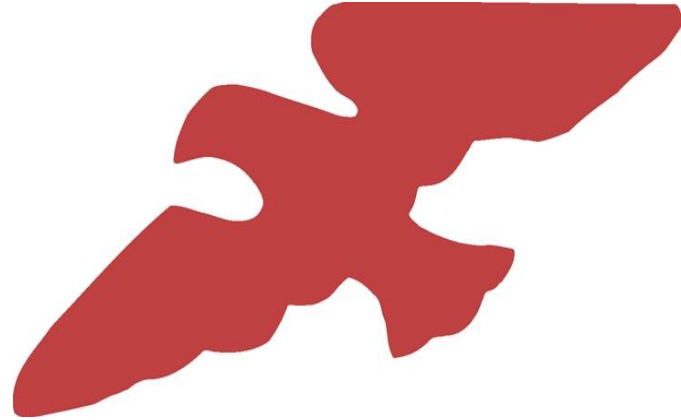
Cases for role play task in Finnish

Roolileikki-tapaukset:

1. Olet kesäleirillä ja leirin 13 osallistujaa aikovat aloittaa jalkapallo-ottelun. Kaikki osallistujat ovat yhdessä valinneet yhden pojan valitsemaan joukkueet. Lopulta kummassakin joukkueessa on 6 pelaajaa, mutta 1 maahanmuuttajataustainen poika on jätetty valitsematta joukkueisiin. Joukkueet valinnut poika sanoo: ”Sinä et voi osallistua peliin, koska muuten joukkueet eivät mene tasan!” Miten reagoit?
2. Olet osallisena kesäleirillä ja näet, kuinka kantasuomalaiset pojat haukkuvat kahta nuorempaa maahanmuuttajataustaista (länsi- ja pohjois-Afrikkalaista) poikaa mm. ”neekriksi” ja ”ählämiksi”. Mitä teet?
3. Olet leirinohjaajana kesäleirillä, kun yksi Muslimityttö tulee kertomaan sinulle, että toiset lapset kiusaavat häntä, koska hänellä on yllään huivi ja pitkät vaatteet, vaikka on kesä. Hän tuntee olonsa yksinäiseksi ja haluaa lähteä kotiin. Mitä voit tehdä?
4. Olet leirinohjaajana nuorten kesäleirillä. Todistat useamman kerran, kuinka yksi poika jätetään aina yksin eikä kukaan puhu hänen kanssaan. Menet juttelemaan pojan kanssa ja kysyt, onko kaikki hyvin. Hän kertoo sinulle, että kukaan muu leirin osanottajista ei halua viettää aikaa hänen kanssaan, koska hän ei pukeudu tarpeeksi muodikkaisiin vaatteisiin eikä hänellä ole älypuhelin. Miten voit auttaa häntä (saada hänet mukaan ryhmään)?

Appendix 3

Certificate for the participants

*Todistus*

_____ on osallistunut Nuorten Kotkien järjestämään rasismiin- ja syrjinnänvastaaiseen vertaisohjaajakoulutusviikonloppuun Kankaan Torpan leirikeskuksessa 16.-18.3.2012 sekä omalla aktiivisella osallistumisellaan auttanut allekirjoittaneita heidän opinnäytetyönsä toteuttamisessa.

Espoossa 21.3.2012

Lara-Elain Bernhauser

Outi Pätsi

Appendix 4

Nuoret Kotkat values in English

OUR VALUES

Provide Safe Recreational Activities for Children
Nuoret Kotkat offers a safe and drug-free environment for the children's free time. The instructors are mainly youth and adult volunteers. That is why the activities are mainly during the evenings, weekends and school holidays. The instructors have a genuine interest and often a long-time experience in working with children. Constant training further increases their skills and know-how.

Children are Listened to
Children need to experience possibilities for influence throughout their childhood. One of the basic ideals of our future society lies to be the involvement of children. The most important places to carry out this are a child's home, their day-care, school and their hobby. The crucial factor is how parents, teachers, authorities and politicians see children and their opinions. Children need to experience that they are being heard and that their opinion matters. That is why the instructors plan and carry out our activities together with the children.

Stronger Childhood
Childhood in Finland has become five years shorter in the last 50 years. The modern parenting methods favor independence from the parents as early as possible. Especially the girls are under pressure on how they look, dress and act far too early. Nuoret Kotkat wants to defend a child's right to childhood and youth. Things that belong to adulthood – like the right to vote in municipal elections – must not be moved to a younger age. This links back to listening to the children: letting children participate also strengthens the appreciation of children and childhood.

Active Citizens
Children participating in our activities learn the skills active citizens, such as interaction, critical thought, empathy and influencing. These make children more likely to become active in the society.

Friendship over Borders
By taking part in our work, children, youth and adults learn to meet new cultures and people both at home and abroad. Camps and other events around the world help make friends over border lines and give practice to language and interaction skills. Nuoret Kotkat is working to help immigrants integrate into Finnish society. All activities, trainings and communications aim to promote tolerance of different people.

Helping a Friend
Solidarity doesn't always need to be international: all volunteer work, helping those who are weaker or less fortunate, is solidarity. We must be prepared to give up some things so that Finland and the world could change for the better. The themes of UN's Millennium Declaration, especially those related to children, are implemented into Nuoret Kotkat activities.



Appendix 5

Kotkaviesti -article in Finnish

OHJAAJAT & VERTSUT



Rasismi

LARA JA OUTI

Me olemme Lara & Outi, 2 sosionomiopiskelijaa Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulusta. Yhteistyössä Espoon Nuorten Kotkien kanssa me suunnittelimme ja toteutimme projektin, joka järjestettiin Kansainvälisellä Rasisminvastaisella Viikolla maaliskuussa 2012.

Vertsukoulutusviikonloppu järjestettiin Kansain Töppän leirikeskuksessa maaliskuussa. Koulutusviikolle on aiheena oli rasismi ja syrjintä.

Kansain Töppä jäi mieleen mukavana ja vilpittävänä leirikeskukseksi. Leirikeskuksen ympäristö oli kostava myös ulkopöydille ja -leikelle. Näin pääsimme nauttimaan keuhkista hängistä ja kirkkaasta aurinkoisesta ilmastista.

Yhdessä tehtäviksi vertsuviikonloppu osanottajille olimme suunnit-

telleet erilaisia tilanteita, joita voisi sattuakin lasten leineillä. Keksityt tilanteet käsittelevät erilaisia kiusaamistilanteita mm. syrjintää ihonvärin vuoksi.

Osanottajat saivat aikaa miettiä ja keksiä ratkaisut tilanteisiin ja esittämään tilanteet selkeästi tilanteen ratkaisemiseksi pieninä roolileikkinä muille osanottajille. Tehtävä meni hyvin, me keskustelimme yhdessä kuinka toimia tilanteissa, joissa toista kiusataan erilaisuuksiensa vuoksi ja kuinka voisimme auttaa kiusattua.

Lauantai-ilapäivänä me leikimme leikkiä nimeltä "Maahanmuutto Eurooppaan". Leikki oli jaettu neljään eri osaan, tehtävään, joiden ideana oli kuvastaa maahanmuuttajien kohtaamia erilaisia haasteita uuteen maahan muuttaessaan. Osanottajien piti esimerkiksi suunnitella esteradasta, jossa piti mm. ryömä ja nousta korkeiden esteiden yli. Lisäksi heidän piti antaa lupaa päästäkseen uuteen maahan.

Lauantai-iltana me katsoimme elokuvan "Freedom Writers".



ja syrjintä

AIHEENA VERTSUKURSSILLA



// Vertsuviikonloppu sujui mielestämme todella hyvin ja osanottajat osallistuivat viikonlopun leikkeihin aktiivisesti!

Elokuva kertoo amerikkalaisista nuorista, jotka ovat hyvin tiiviisti vain oman rotunsa edustajien kanssa. Kuitenkin heidän uusi opettajansa tekee kovasti töitä saadaakseen heidän yhtenäisemmäksi, sinä myös onnistuen. Elokuvan aikana herkuteltimme mm. sipseillä ja lauantai-illan kunniaksi myös saunoimme.

Vertsuviikonloppu sujui mielestämme todella hyvin ja osanottajat osallistuivat viikonlopun leikkeihin aktiivisesti!

Joka vuosi 21.3. juhlitaan Kansainvälistä Rasisminvastaista Päivää. Tätä päivää juhlitimme Kaustlahden Puikkarissa vertsuviikonlopun jälkeen. YK julisti tämän päivän Sharpevillessä, Etelä-Afrikassa, tapahtuneen massamurhan muistoksi 1960. 21.3.1960 monet tummahoiset ihmiset osoittivat mieltään rotusyrjintää vastaan. Paikalliset poliisit ampuivat yhteensä 69 mielenosoittajaa.

Kansainvälisen Rasisminvastaisen Päivän kunniaksi tarjosimme

osanottajille Puikkarissa kakkua ja kahvia ja puhuimme Sharpevillen tapahtumista. Näytimme heille myös tekemämme videon vertsuviikonlopun tapahtumista ja annoimme osallistumistodistukset vertsuviikonlopun osallistujille.

Toivomme Nuorten Kotkien työskentelevän yhteistyönä aikansaunooja Karssinvälillä Rasisminvastaisilla Viikoilla myös tulevaisuudessa!

;))

Appendix 6

Kotkaviestä -article in English

“We are Lara & Outi, two social services -students from Laurea University of Applied Sciences. As our thesis project, we planned and implemented a training weekend, ”vertsupoulutusviikonloppu”, together with Nuoret Kotkat in Espoo. The training weekend was implemented during International Weeks Against Racism in March 2012.

The training weekend was held in Kankaan Torppa -summer camp from 16th to 18th of March 2012. The theme of the training weekend was racism and discrimination. Kankaan Torppa is very pleasant and cosy camp area. Additionally, surroundings of the camp area are excellent for outdoor games. Being able to implement activities also outdoors gave us the chance to enjoy the warm spring weather as well.

As one of the activities for the participants of the training weekend we had planned different situations, which could occur at children’s camps. Made-up cases illustrated different kind of bullying situations, for example, discrimination because of the skin colour. The participants were divided into smaller groups and given time to think solutions for the cases. After that, the participants performed a little role-play of the case and its solution for the rest of the participants.

The activity went well, we discussed together how to act in situations, where someone is bullied for being somehow different from others and how to help the victim of the bullying.

On Saturday afternoon we played a game called ”Immigration to Europe”. The game is divided into four different tasks, which represent the challenges the immigrants might face when entering to the new country. For example, the participants had to get through an obstacle path, where they had to crawl and cross tall obstacles. They also had to request the permission to be able to enter to the new country.

On Saturday evening we watched the movie called ”Freedom Writers”. The movie is about young people living in northern America, who are very tightly just with their own ethnicity groups. However, their new teacher works hard to get the class more united, luckily successfully in the end. Nuoret Kotkat offered us sweet and salty snacks while watching the movie. After the movie we were able to use the sauna, if wanted.

In our opinion, the training weekend went very well and all the participants took part of the program actively!

Every year, 21st of March is the International Day Against Racism. We honored the day at Puikkari in Kauklahti after the training weekend. The United Nations declared the day to honor the victims of the massacre happened in Sharpeville, South Africa in 1960. 21st of March in 1960 many black people were demonstrating against apartheid. The local police shot altogether 69 demonstrators.

To honor the International Day Against Racism, we offered baked goods and coffee/tea and discussed about the massacre in Sharpeville at Puikkari. We also showed the video we had made of the training weekend and gave certificates for the participants of the training weekend.

We hope our co-operation with Nuoret Kotkat will continue and we hope to do activities again during the International Weeks Against Racism in the future!”